

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2192

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L L E N I N G R A D 0 6 6 9

LIMDIS

EO 11652GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJ: CURIOUS BEHAVIOR OF SOVIET MID REPRESENTATIVE

1. SUMMARY: LENINGRAD MID REPRESENTATIVE AIRS NEGATIVE VIEWS OF U.S. AT JAPANESE RECEPTION. END SUMMARY.

2. TOWARD END OF JAPANESE NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION, JAPANESE CONSUL GENERAL AND I WERE JOINED BY MID REPRESENTATIVE G.I. POPOV AND CZECH CONSUL GENERAL. FOR NO EVIDENT REASON, POPOV IMMEDIATELY LAUNCHED INTO A SERIES OF OBSERVATIONS CRITICAL OF THE U.S. HE BEGAN BY ASSERTING THAT IF HE WERE THE SECRETARY, HE WOULD NOT HAVE GONE TO AFRICA SINCE THERE WAS NOTHING HE COULD ACHIEVE THERE. HE MOVED ON TO THE RELATIVE MERITS OF "SOCIALISM" AND CAPITALISM, DISMISSED U.S. ELECTIONS AS A FARCE, PRAISED "REAL DEMOCRACY" IN THE USSR, AND ASKED WHY GUS HALL HAD NOT RECEIVED MONEY THE WAY OTHER CANDIDATES HAD (IGNORING MY OBSERVATION THAT I WAS UNAWARE HALL WAS A CANDIDATE).

3. U.S. FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE INCORPORATION OF THE BALTIC REPUBLICS INTO THE USSR WAS HIS NEXT TARGET AND HE SCATHINGLY DISMISSED U.S. POLICY AS MEANINGLESS SINCE I, AS CONSUL GENERAL, HAD VISITED THE BALTIC CAPITALS AND HAD HAD DEALINGS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN EACH OF THEM.

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4. INCREASINGLY ANNOYED BY HIS UNPROVOKED TIRADE AGAINST U.S.

POLICIES, I SUGGESTED THAT, IF THE SOVIET UNION WERE UNABLE TO CONCEIVE OF INDEPENDENT BALTIC REPUBLICS, IT MIGHT AT LEAST CONSIDER THE MUCH SMALLER STEP OF RETURNING THE NORTHERN ISLANDS TO JAPAN. THIS WAS, ADMITTEDLY, A MISTAKE. HE TURNED TO THE JAPANESE CG AND ASSERTED LOUDLY THAT THE ISLANDS WOULD NEVER BE RETURNED, CERTAINLY NOT WHILE HIS GENERATION HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT.

5. POPOV'S FINAL SHOT AT ME WAS THAT THE U.S. HAD NEVER DONE ANYTHING FOR JAPAN AND, INDEED, HAD USED THE ATOM BOMB ON HEROSHIMA AFTER THE WAR WAS OVER. AT THIS POINT, I TOLD POPOV THAT HE WAS NOT BEING DIPLOMATIC, THAT I HAD NO REASON TO LISTEN TO INSULTS OF THIS SORT, AND SAID GOODBYE TO MY HOST. POPOV SEEMED EMBARRASSED AND INSISTED WE SHAKE HANDS BEFORE I LEFT.

6. COMMENT: POPOV IS, OF COURSE, A RETIRED PARTY HACK WITH NO DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE. HE IS USUALLY TACITURN IN THE EXTREME AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT SET HIM OFF (THE JAPANESE CG SAYS IT WAS TOO MUCH VODKA). HIS REMARKS ARE, OF COURSE, DEVOID OF CONTENT OR MEANING IN ANY BOADER CONTEXT BUT IT IS DISTRESSING TO OBSERVE SUCH CLEAR AND EVEN CONTEMPTUOUS ANTI-AMERICANISM IN THE MAN WITH WHOM, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, WE HAVE TO DEAL IN LENINGRAD.

NEUBERT

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